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SUBJECT: COUNTER-INSURGENCY DOCTRINE COMES TO RIO'S FAVELAS

Classified By: Principal Officer Dennis W. Hearne. Reasons (1.4 b,d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Beginning in December 2008, Rio de Janeiro Governor Sergio Cabral, with support from Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes, launched a comprehensive program to "pacify" Rio de Janeiro's violent favelas (i.e., vast shantytowns that are spread around the city's core) by establishing and maintaining a sustained police and state presence. The key component of the Favela Pacification Program is the Pacification Police (UPP), whose ranks number approximately 500 officers. From a security perspective, the Favela Pacification Program has thus far been successful in the four Rio favelas under UPP control, but the subsequent delivery of basic services and social assistance programs has reportedly been uneven. In addition to the obvious security factors involved with the pacification program, there are also significant economic interests at stake, with some analysts estimating Rio de Janeiro's economy would grow by 38 billion Brazilian Reals (21 billion USD) should favelas be reincorporated into mainstream society and markets. The Favela Pacification Program shares some characteristics with U.S. counter-insurgency doctrine and strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq. The program's success will ultimately depend not only on effective and sustained coordination between the police and state/municipal governments, but also favela residents' perception of the legitimacy of the state. End Summary.

FAVELA PACIFICATION PROGRAM

¶2. (U) Beginning in December 2008, Rio de Janeiro Governor Sergio Cabral, with support from Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes, launched a comprehensive program to "pacify" Rio de Janeiro's violent favelas by establishing and maintaining a sustained police and state presence. To date, police units have entered four such favelas - City of God, Jardim do Batan, Santa Marta, and Chapeu Mangueira/Babylonia - and continue to maintain a presence within them. While Rio's favelas have often been a target of police operations with a goal of disrupting narco-trafficking activities, the Favela Pacification Program marks the first time that state, municipal, or federal authorities are attempting a "clear and hold" approach, the success of which is predicated upon pushing criminal elements out of the community, establishing a permanent police and government presence, then providing basic services and civic privileges to favela residents. This approach closely resembles U.S. counter-insurgency doctrine in Afghanistan and Iraq, and highlights the extent to which favelas have been outside state authority. Favelas, which first emerged in the late 19th century and grew extensively in Rio de Janeiro over the past three decades, are urban communities of varying size whose residents generally do not hold title to their homes. Due to the inherently marginalized nature of favelas, various criminal

elements have historically flourished within them, using the communities as platforms from which to conduct drug trafficking activities, pirate services for its residents, and launch other criminal activities throughout the city. There are approximately 1,000 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, with an estimated 1 million inhabitants.

RIO SECURITY CHIEF: "WE ARE AT WAR"

¶3. (C) In a September 22 meeting with Principal Officer, State Secretary for Public Security Jose Beltrame explained the Favela Pacification Program and its importance to Rio de Janeiro's overall security. "You cannot imagine what government neglect of the favelas have done to this city. It is a failure of public service," he said. Stating the Rio government was now "at war," Beltrame explained, "We have a few hundred criminals causing terror in a few million." Stating the state needed to act, he emphasized the goal of the program is not to eliminate all violence and drug trafficking in the favelas, but rather to establish a state presence that can allow for the delivery of basic services, such as trash collection, and social programs, such as health attention and education. Under the program, state police special operations units (BOPE) enter a favela by force. Once criminal elements that control a favela are purged, state-administered pacification police units (UPP) then replace traditional police forces, in order to maintain order, foster long-term ties between the state and the community, and assist with the delivery of basic services to the favela.

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PACIFICATION POLICE CHIEF: "WE DO NOT NEED A RAMBO"

¶4. (C) The key component of the Favela Pacification Program is the Pacification Police (UPP). There are currently 500 pacification police (UPP) officers in the four "pacified" favelas, with the number of officers assigned to each favela depending on levels of existing criminal activity. For example, only 55 UPP officers are required to maintain order in the favela of Jardim do Batan which has approximately 40,000 residents, while 160 UPP officers are required in the favela Santa Marta, which has only 3,000 residents. UPP commander Colonel Jose Carvalho - a former United Nations Peacekeeping Commander - told us on August 25 that only new police academy recruits are selected into the UPP program. "We need fresh, strong minds, not a Rambo," Carvalho stated. "The older generation of cops is more oriented to kicking down doors and shooting people." Following acceptance into the UPP, officers receive additional training in human rights and community outreach, in addition to community profile briefings specific to the officer's assigned favela. Carvalho said active UPP officers are also subject to internal affairs undercover operations, to ensure UPP officers are not abusing their power within the favelas.

PROGRESS, BUT MANY CHALLENGES

¶5. (C) From a security perspective, the Favela Pacification Program has thus far been successful in the four Rio favelas under UPP control, but the subsequent delivery of basic services and social programs appears to be uneven. BOPE Lieutenant Wolney Francisco de Paula told us on August 19 that BOPE units entering the favelas encountered no resistance from the narco-trafficking gangs that had de facto control of the communities, while UPP Colonel Carvalho claimed there have been no UPP-related fatalities in the favelas under pacification. That said, the delivery of basic services and implementation of social programs are reported to be uneven among the four favelas. Carvalho explained, for example, that his officers had to quell a near riot in the Chapeu Mangueira/Babylonia favela, after its residents protested that they were not receiving equal benefits as other "pacified" favelas. Carvalho blamed the Rio de Janeiro state government for failing to provide essential services,

stating "There are no services there, and the state is not organized enough to provide them." Favela representatives, while generally supporting the pacification program, universally cite the need for more social programs and basic services. During a September 18 symposium on favela development sponsored by the BNDES - the Brazilian development bank - Rio favela resident association representatives recognized efforts by the state, municipal, and federal governments to address the plight of the favelas, but voiced concerns over how money was being spent. For example, a community leader from pacified favela Santa Marta, Jose Mario dos Santos, questioned why state money was being used to construct a wall around that community. Rosino de Castro Diniz, president of the Federation of Favela Associations in Rio de Janeiro, told us the pacification program could not succeed without a concerted effort to provide jobs and social services to residents.

¶ 6. (C) Another significant factor for the project's success will be how receptive favela residents are to assuming civic responsibilities, such as paying for legitimate services and taxes. BOPE Lieutenant Francisco de Paula, who is also a resident of the Jardim de Batan favela, told us many in his community were resistant to the idea of having to switch from paying pirated sources of services, such as electricity and water, to higher-priced legitimate providers. Carvalho also said his officers encountered wide-spread confusion among residents that, until now, have been paying for electricity and cable TV service through pirated sources. "It is very difficult for them to all of a sudden have to pay for services they previously received for less or even free," he said. Carvalho also lamented the overall mentality of favela residents who lived for decades under the sway of narco-trafficking groups. "This generation is lost," he said. "We need to focus on children through providing sports and education programs."

¶ 7. (SBU) Security experts see a possible link between the pacification program and an increase in crime in Rio de Janeiro's more affluent neighborhoods, such as Ipanema, Leblon, and Copacabana, collectively known as "Zona Sul." Rio de Janeiro's Public Security Institute (ISP) reported a 50 percent increase in residential theft and a 52 percent in

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robberies of businesses in Zona Sul from December 2008 to July 2009, compared with the same period the year prior. Julita Lemgruber, director for the Center for Security and Civics (CESEC) and a former police ombudsman, said this increase was due to drug traffickers - forced out of the drug trade in UPP-occupied favelas - now branching out into other criminal activities outside of the favelas. Beltrame had a similar theory, explaining the structure of narco-trafficking networks played a role in the increase. "When we hit these guys at the top, they lose jobs at the bottom. This results in more street crime."

¶ 8. (C) Wilson Carlos Carvalho, a senior adviser to Governor Cabral on security matters, told us on August 28 that the federal government needed to do more to assist with the favela problem and the crime increasing in other parts of the city, highlighting the large flow of arms and drugs into Rio de Janeiro. "We do not have any arms factories or coca fields in Rio de Janeiro. More needs to be done to control the borders," he said (Note: Beltrame also expressed concern over the proliferation of military-grade weapons in Rio de Janeiro, and said most illegal arms were of American origin and issued to foreign armies, such as Colombia, Bolivia, and Paraguay. End Note).

EXPANDING THE PACIFICATION

¶ 9. (C) State Security Secretary Beltrame offered to share the strategic plan for the favela program with Consulate officers and to take the PO into a "pacified" favela in the near future. Beltrame stated of the 50 favelas he envisions

pacified by the end of 2010, "Complexo de Alemao" was the principal target. The Complexo de Alemao is an enormous favela with over 200,000 residents and heavily armed criminal groups entrenched. The scope of an operation into Complexo de Alemao would be vast and the scale of violence potentially "traumatic," Beltrame said. Beltrame seemed determined, however, noting the operation would likely take place in early 2010. "This favela is totally outside of state authority, and it is the epicenter of the fight," he stated. Although Wilson Carlos Carvalho, the Cabral adviser, told us that the Intelligence Branch of the State Secretariat for Public Security had mapped more than 90 favelas in the city for eventual UPP operations, Beltrame said only 10-12 favelas, including Complexo de Alemao, would be critical to the program. "We do not need to take over 100 favelas. The real violence is concentrated in only about a dozen," he explained. In order to meet the manpower requirements for extending the pacification program, Wilson Carlos Carvalho said the Military Police would recruit 7,000 new police officers, 3,500 of whom would join the UPP ranks by next year. Beltrame's estimate of police recruitment was more expansive, with a projection of 30,000 new police officers on Rio's streets by 2016.

ECONOMICS OF FAVELA PACIFICATION

¶10. (SBU) In addition to the security factors involved with the pacification program, there are also significant economic interests at stake. Some economists have forecast an increase of 90 million Brazilian Reals (45 million USD) in new property and service taxes that would go towards the Rio municipal government, should all favelas come under the authority of Rio state. The president of Rio electricity provider "Light" estimated the economy of Rio de Janeiro could grow by around 38 billion Brazilian Reals (21 billion USD) through increased commerce and new jobs. According to Andre Urani, an economist with the Institute of Labor and Social Research (IETS), Light loses at least 200 million USD per year due to pirated electricity in the favelas (Note: Light donated 600 low energy consumption refrigerators to residents in Santa Marta favela, in order to encourage their integration as utility customers. End Note). Emphasizing the potential market in favelas, Urani stated, "Imagine the revenue increase if Light could successfully turn the one million illegal users of its services into customers." According to data provided by the Rio State Secretariat for Security, operations to fully pacify and reintegrate favelas would cost the state between 90 million to 340 million Brazilian Reals (48 million to 183 million USD).

COMMENT

¶11. (SBU) The Favela Pacification Program shares some characteristics with U.S. counter-insurgency strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Like counter-insurgency, the

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population is the true center of gravity, and the program's success will ultimately depend not only on effective and sustained coordination between the police and state/municipal governments, but on favela residents' perception of the legitimacy of state. One of the principal challenges in this project is to convince favela populations that the benefits of submitting to state authority (security, legitimate land ownership, access to education) outweigh the costs (taxes, utility fees, civil obedience). As with American counter-insurgency doctrine, we should not expect results overnight. If the program is limited to Governor Cabral's 2010 reelection campaign or constitutes little more than an initiative crafted to bolster Rio de Janeiro's 2016 bid for the Olympics, as some critics have charged, it offers little chance of success. If, however, the program wins over "hearts and minds" in the favelas, and continues to enjoy genuine support from the governor and the mayor, bolstered by private enterprise lured by the prospects of reintegrating some one million favela residents into mainstream markets,

this program could remake the social and economic fabric of Rio de Janeiro. Post will work closely with the relevant state authorities to facilitate exchanges, seminars, and institutional partnerships towards this end. End Comment.

HEARNE